Operating an ECS Program
An Administrative Handbook
1983

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Alberta
CHILDHOOD SERVICES

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FOREWORD

This handbook is to be used as a resource for operators of new and existing Early Childhood Services programs.

References are made to other documents which contain specific information about program planning regulations.

This handbook has no legislative sanction. Orders-in-Council, Ministerial Orders and Regulations should be consulted when interpreting policies.

Particular attention should be given to sections which describe conditions operators must meet to have their programs approved and grants paid:

- Selecting an Operator - Refer to Section II
- Obtaining Program Application Approval - Refer to Section IX
- Staffing - Refer to Section X
- Arranging for Facilities - Refer to Section XI

Each section of this handbook should be considered when planning or reviewing an Early Childhood Services program. The sections do not need to be considered in the order presented.

Details of Special Educational Services for children of school age may be obtained from Special Education Services Branch, Alberta Education.

I PLANNING A NEW ECS PROGRAM

Organizational Meetings

Any group or individual may call meetings to begin to organize an Early Childhood Services (ECS) program.

When preparing agenda for organizational meetings, consider:

- What is an Early Childhood Services Program?
- Why is a program needed?
- Who should operate the program?
- What children are eligible?
- What funds and other resources are available locally and provincially?
- What suitable facilities are available?
- Will transportation be required?
- Is qualified staff available?

Steering Committee

Organizational meetings should result in:

- A decision whether or not to establish an ECS program; or
- The formation of a steering committee to:
  - gather further information,
  - survey resources and services,
  - obtain community support,
- Arrangements for meetings and work sessions.

The school superintendent should be involved when it is anticipated that:

- The program will be operated by a school board,
- There will be a contract between a school board and a society.

The steering committee should review each section of this handbook as a basis for gathering information and preparing recommendations for the new program.

Assistance

Alberta Education provides ECS consultancy services to assist with the development and operation of ECS programs. Other sources of assistance are identified throughout this handbook.

II SELECTING AN OPERATOR

The steering committee should determine the wishes of parents and community when considering who should be the legal operator.

- Alternative 1 - Society or private school.
  If alternative 1 is chosen, an incorporated non-profit society or private school will have responsibility for the operation of the program.

- Alternative 2 - School Board.
  If alternative 2 is chosen, a school board will have responsibility for the operation of the program.

III OPERATING AS A SOCIETY

Incorporation

Incorporation may be accomplished under the Societies Act, Chapter S-18 of the Revised Statutes of Alberta, 1980, and subsequent amendments.

Information, application forms and guidelines for incorporation are available from:

Corporate Registry,
Alberta Consumer & Corporate Affairs.

To receive ECS grants, a society must be incorporated. When a society is incorporated:

- A member is not, in his individual capacity, liable for a debt or liability of the society,
- The society may hold title to property,
- It may contract in its own name.

Documents

Incorporation documents consist of:

- An application containing the objects of a society according to the form in Schedule A of the Societies Act,
- By-laws containing provisions for all matters set out in Schedule B of the Act.

Both documents must be dated, signed by the same applicants (at least five) witnessed and submitted in duplicate to the Corporate Registry. A fee is charged by the Corporate Registry.

If an existing society such as a community association or church operates an ECS program, the objects and by-laws of that society must be compatible with the published philosophy, goals, and program dimensions of Early Childhood Services.

Incorporation Certificate

A society offering an ECS program for the first time is required to provide to the ECS Branch a copy of its incorporation certificate.

Letter of Status

An ECS society renewing its approval to operate an ECS program must obtain a Letter of Status dated after March 31 each year from the Corporate Registry. The Secretary should request that a copy be forwarded by the Corporate Registry to the ECS Branch.

By-Laws

In addition to those items outlined in the sample by-laws provided by the Corporate Registry, societies should ensure that:

- Annual meeting dates and election of officers coincide with the end of the ECS financial year which is June 30th,
- Provision is made at each annual meeting for a review of the society's objects and by-laws.

Membership

Every society must state in its by-laws who will be eligible for membership.

Membership may be unrestricted or may be specified by:

- Age,
- Residence,
- Payment of an annual fee,
- Other qualification.

Provision for withdrawal or termination of membership is usually stated in a by-law.

Employees may hold membership in a society for which they work but to avoid conflict of interest employees are advised not to hold executive positions.Such restriction should be recorded in the by-laws.

Board of Directors

The by-laws of a society should specify:

- How the Board of Directors is to be elected,
- What executive positions are required,
- The responsibilities of each position.

Usually, executive officers of the Board of Directors include a:

- President,
- Vice-President,
- Secretary,
- Treasurer.

Sometimes the secretary and treasurer positions are held by one person.

It is acceptable to have an appointed or employed treasurer which may be a non-voting position.

Responsibilities of a Board of Directors

The Board of Directors has final responsibility for administration of all functions of the society and is accountable to the membership.

Duties may be delegated to individual board members, to the Local Advisory Committee or to employees and volunteers.

Plans developed by individuals or groups to fulfil designated duties should be presented to the Board of Directors for approval before the plans are implemented. This keeps everyone informed and maintains the legal obligations of the Board.

President The President is the senior executive officer responsible for:

- Ensuring society affairs are conducted according to the objects and by-laws,
- Coordinating all business affairs of the society,
- Planning and conducting annual and special meetings of the society as well as meetings of the Board of Directors,
- Supervising the activities of all other positions to ensure that their duties are being properly fulfilled,
- Serving as an ex-officio member of all committees of the society.

Vice-president The Vice-president is an executive officer responsible for:

- Assisting the president in conducting the society's affairs,
- Undertaking the president's duties when that person is absent,
- Accepting responsibility for other designated duties.

Secretary The Secretary is an executive officer responsible for:

- Preparing and maintaining on file minutes of the society and the Board of Directors,
- Preparing, receiving and maintaining on file all correspondence for the society and the Board,
- Keeping a record of society members,
- Accepting responsibility for other designated duties.

Minutes

As official documents which record the affairs and decisions of the society, the minutes should include:

- The date, time and place of each meeting,
- The kind of meeting (regular or special),
- The name of the chairman of the meeting,
- A list of members and guests attending,
- Approval of minutes of preceding meeting which should then be signed by the President,
- A summary of individual and committee reports (written reports to be attached to the minutes),
- Decisions made, whether by consensus or by motion,
- The mover, seconder and result (carried or lost) of each motion,
- Policies and administrative procedures not defined in the by-laws,
- A statement of the total amount of monthly accounts payable,
- A record of motion authorizing the treasurer to pay monthly accounts and make other business transactions,
- Any item of information as directed by the society or board.

If a meeting concludes before the agenda is completed, remaining items should be recorded in the minutes and placed before the next meeting.

Minutes should be kept brief, factual and organized so that all resolutions and policy decisions are clearly and easily identified.

Minutes are Legal Documents

As legal records of the society, the minutes form part of the accounting records. The minutes record:

- Adoption of the annual budget,
- Establishment of positions, pay rates, commencement and termination dates for staff,
- Authorization of emergency or special expenditures not provided in the budget,
- Authorization of all financial and contracting arrangements.

Because of their importance, minutes are usually the first documents to be impounded in the event of court action.

Treasurer

The treasurer may be an elected, appointed or employed position responsible for:

- Ensuring financial accounts, contracts and agreements are conducted according to sound accounting and business practices,
- Maintaining on file staff employment documents,
- Receiving monies payable to the society,
- Depositing cash and cheques promptly,
- Paying accounts after authorized to do so by the Board of Directors,
- Paying accounts by cheque, counter-signed by a designated executive officer, usually the President,
- Keeping a detailed record of all monies received and expended,
- Balancing financial books and preparing a bank reconciliation statement each month,
- Presenting a monthly financial report to the board and an annual report to the society,
- Maintaining a file of all receipts or vouchers for which funds were paid out,

. Maintaining a file of all cancelled cheques,
. Preparing grant claim forms and mailing them to the Financial Services Branch, Alberta Education,
. Preparing the annual budget for adoption by the society and submission to the School Business Administration Services Branch, Alberta Education before September 30th,
. Submitting the annual "Audited Financial Statement" report to the School Business Administration Services Branch before September 30th.

Assistance

Assistance with budgeting, accounting, record keeping, completion of claim forms and grant entitlement may be obtained from:

. The Financial Services Branch,
. The School Business Administration Services Branch,
. Regional financial workshops,
. Grant regulations.

IV FORMING A LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

When a decision is made to establish or continue operation of an ECS program, a Local Advisory Committee (LAC) should be formed to provide advice to the operator.

Rationale

The operator has final responsibility for decisions, including those delegated to LAC, staff or volunteers.
The LAC provides opportunity for parents, staff and resource people to share ideas and work together.

Parents have the right to share in decisions that affect their children. They have skills, interests and knowledge which can be shared with children, other parents, staff and community.

To be effective the LAC must have a clear understanding of its relationship to the operator. It is the operator's responsibility to clarify and maintain this relationship and to provide support for effective functioning of the LAC.

Responsibilities

The LAC may:

- Recommend policy and administrative procedures to the operator on such matters as staffing, hours of operation and fees,
- Participate in planning, implementation and evaluation of the program for children, parents or staff,
- Assist in obtaining resources and services,
- Recommend and participate in plans for effective communication among operator, parents, staff and service agencies,
- Assist parents to be involved in annual assessment of needs and goal-setting for the program.

Membership

The majority of members of the LAC each year should be parents of children in the program.

To provide continuity from year to year, include parents from the previous year's committee and those whose children may be in the program in future years.

The LAC may also include representatives from health, social, recreational, cultural and educational service agencies. ECS staff should also be expected to participate.

System Advisory Committee

Where a society or school board operates an Early Childhood Services system, a system advisory committee should be organized. Refer to Section IX.

The duties of this committee may include:

- Planning for coordination of activities, resources and services for all centres in the system,
- Planning for effective communication among centres,
- Recommending policy and administrative procedures related to the operation of the system.

The membership of this committee should be representative of Local Advisory Committees, staff, service agencies and the operator.

Regional Coordination Ccommittee

Identification and planning for use of regional resources and services is an important function of a regional coordination committee.

Membership in this committee is usually made up of representatives from several ECS operators and service agencies. Operators of other programs for young children may also be invited to participate. Refer to Section VIII.

V CONTRACTING SERVICES

When an ECS operator and a non-ECS organization agree to divide responsibilities for the operation of an ECS program a contract must be made.

The purpose of the contract is to set out responsibilities that each of the parties will undertake.

Contract Condition

When a contract is prepared it must be submitted for approval to the School Business Administration Services Branch.

A sample contract form is available from:
School Business Administration Services Branch,
Alberta Education.

VI DEVELOPING A DECISION MAKING PLAN

The operator has responsibility for developing and maintaining a decision making plan. The way in which parents and service agencies will be involved in the decision making process may vary from program to program.

The plan should be simple, workable and clearly indicate:

. What decisions will be made by the
- operator,
- parents,
- LAC,
- ECS staff,
- service agencies,

- How decisions made by others will be ratified by the operator,
- How the operator's plan will relate to the decision making plan of the Regional Coordination Committee to which the operator belongs,
- How everyone involved will be kept informed.

VII DETERMINING PROGRAM NEEDS

A need can be stated as the difference between what IS and what is agreed OUGHT to be.

Planning an ECS program begins with the identification of children's needs. Needs of parents, other family members, staff and community may be related to the children's needs.

Procedures

Some procedures which may be used are:

- Surveys of education, health, cultural and social conditions in the community,
- Interagency seminars,
- Workshops, group discussions, or presentations by early childhood specialists,
- Study of audio-visual and print resources materials,
- Meetings which bring together parents, staff, agency representatives and program specialists.

Parent and Community Roles in Determining Needs

Parents and service agencies should be involved with the ECS operator and staff in:

- Determining needs of children, parents, staff and community as a basis for program development,
- Reviewing identified needs and determining the extent to which they are being met.

The ECS operator is responsible for seeing that a needs assessment plan is functioning. Parents and service agencies should share responsibility with staff for carrying out the plan and for working towards satisfaction of identified needs.

VIII COORDINATING SERVICES

The purpose of coordination is to provide for efficient use of resources and services.

At local and regional levels there should be organized ways to provide coordination of health, social, recreation and education services to children and parents.

Local Coordination

Locally, coordination may be provided through the:

- Program Coordinator,
- Local Advisory Committee,
- System Advisory Committee where one exists.

To be effective, the local coordination plan should be based upon:

- Identified needs,
- Written objectives,
- A clear division of duties among the individuals and committee(s) involved.

For information about the identification and use of community resources and services see the Community Resources Guide, 1980 edition.

Regional Coordination

Operators and service agencies from several communities within a geographic area are encouraged to organize a Regional Coordination Committee.

To be effective, regional coordination activities should be based upon:

- Needs of the region,
- Written objectives which are shared by members,
- A well organized structure for membership, leadership and communications.

The purposes of this committee may be to:

- Identify regional needs and work towards meeting them,
- Develop a regional communication network,
- Develop regional parent and staff program activities which support goals of local ECS programs,
- Identify and attempt to resolve issues which concern ECS local programs and service agencies.

Plan for effective delivery of services to local ECS programs.

IX OBTAINING PROGRAM APPLICATION APPROVAL

Timelines

Refer to Timelines for submission of ECS Documents, which is revised each spring. Copies are mailed annually to all operators and additional copies are available from the ECS Branch.

New Application — Application forms for new programs may be obtained from the ECS Branch. Refer to Section I.

Renewal Application — Renewal Program Application Forms are sent annually to operators by the ECS Branch.

System Application — An ECS operator which operates several centres may, with prior approval of the ECS Branch, submit an Application to Operate an Early Childhood Services System.

Approval Criteria — Six criteria are considered in the approval of new and renewal program applications. These criteria are:

- A needs assessment plan to identify the needs of children, parents, staff and community,
- A logical relationship among needs, objectives, program plans and evaluation,
- A decision-making plan involving those most affected by the decisions made. Refer to Section VI.
- An orientation plan for acquainting parents, staff and resource persons with the ECS philosophy, goals and program dimensions,
- A plan for coordinating services within each community and within the region. Refer to Section VIII.
- A plan for evaluating the achievement of program objectives. Refer to Section XVIII.

X STAFFING

Competencies

When selecting staff, the following competencies should be considered:

- Effective communication skills,
- Knowledge of child development and learning processes,
- Ability to plan, implement and evaluate programs for normal and special needs children,
- Ability to work effectively with children, parents and resource people.

Teachers

In addition to these competencies, Early Childhood Services teachers require:

- An Alberta Teaching Certificate OR a Letter of Authority, and
- An Alberta Early Childhood Services Diploma OR an Interim Permit.

ECS Diploma

A Early Childhood Services Diploma is issued by Alberta Education when a teacher possesses specialization in FIVE full university course equivalents selected from the following areas:

- Child development and learning,
- Curriculum areas,
- Programming,
- Practicum,
- Family, staff and community relations,
- A minimum of one-half course is required from each of the above five areas.

Teacher Responsibility

A qualified teacher is responsible for:

- Coordination of educational services for the children's program,
- Identification of each child's needs and, formulation of program objectives based on needs,
- Implementation of children's program activities,
- Evaluation of children's progress.

Teacher Approval Procedures

ECS Diplomas, Interim Permits and Letters of Authority are issued by the Registrar, Alberta Education.

Procedures used to assist teachers in determining their eligibility are:

- Teachers registered in a degree or graduate diploma program who wish to obtain an ECS Diploma should consult the early childhood staff at the university. A statement from the university indicating the courses completed in early childhood education should be submitted to the Registrar, Alberta Education,
- Teachers who wish to work towards an ECS Diploma as special students should contact the Registrar, Alberta Education for assistance in determining what courses to take,
- Interim Permits and Letters of Authority may be issued to a teacher to teach in a specific ECS centre, are not transferable and are issued for a specified period.

The operator is responsible for submission of all information required for teacher approval to the Registrar, Alberta Education.

IF THE TEACHER POSSESSES AN ALBERTA TEACHING CERTIFICATE AND ECS DIPLOMA:

- The teacher must complete a Work Assignment Form for each centre in which he or she teaches. The Work Assignment Form must be submitted annually to the ECS Branch by the operator.

IF THE TEACHER POSSESSES AN ALBERTA TEACHING CERTIFICATE BUT DOES NOT POSSESS AN ECS DIPLOMA:

- The teacher must complete a Work Assignment Form for each centre in which he or she teaches. The Work Assignment Form must be submitted annually to the ECS Branch by the operator,
- To obtain an Interim Permit the teacher must submit to the Registrar, Alberta Education transcripts of courses each year and complete an Application for an Interim permit,
- Teachers employed by a school board, require recommendations from the Superintendent,
- Teachers employed by a society or approved private school require recommendations from the Regional Office consultant, Alberta Education.

IF THE TEACHER DOES NOT HAVE AN ALBERTA TEACHING CERTIFICATE:

- The teacher must complete a Work Assignment Form for each centre in which he or she teaches. The Work Assignment Form must be submitted annually to the ECS Branch by the operator,
- The teacher should contact the Registrar, Alberta Education to determine eligibility for approval.

Permanent Teaching Certificate

An Interim Teaching Certificate may be made permanent in accordance with regulations concerning certification of teachers in Alberta. For information and assistance regarding teacher certification contact the:

Registrar's Office,
Alberta Education.

Teachers' Retirement Fund

All teachers employed by school jurisdictions must contribute to the fund.

An ECS society may apply to the Financial Services Branch to permit teachers to participate in the Teachers' Retirement Fund (TRF).

The letter of application should recognize the requirement for an employer's contribution and that all teachers employed by the operator must participate in the Fund, once the application is approved.

If approved, the operator is required to:

- Contribute an amount equal to the contribution of each teacher plus 2%. The amount of the teacher's contributions is determined by the Board of Administrators of the TRF, but will not be less than 3% nor more than 7% of salary,
- Deduct the required teacher's contribution from each teacher's salary;
- Forward monthly to TRF the amount of the teacher's contribution and the employer's contribution,
- Annually report to TRF each teacher's name, social insurance number, salary rate, total salary earned, amounts deducted and the number of days for which salary was paid.

Assistance

For further information contact:
Financial Services Branch,
Alberta Education.

Coordinator

Each operator must appoint a coordinator to its staff.

The Coordinator's responsibilities may be to:

- Assist other staff and LAC to develop the program,
- Assist in recruitment of other staff,
- Assist in budget preparation,
- Identify and arrange for the use of community resources and services,
- Provide leadership, in planning, implementing and evaluating programs for children, parents and staff,
- Represent the operator on a regional coordination committee.

Instructional Assistants

A qualified instructional assistant should have college training in early childhood development and in family studies.

Under the supervision of a qualified teacher, an instructional assistant may be assigned a wide range of instructional responsibilities such as:

- Assisting children in special programs,
- Providing individual or small group instruction,
- Directing a variety of group activities.

Aides

Volunteers or employed aides who have interests and skills related to working with children and families may be assigned general responsibilities which support the work of teachers and instructional assistants.

In the case of a limited number of handicapped children, a rehabilitation aide may be required in order to facilitate a child's presence in a regular ECS program. For specific details, contact Regional Office consultants.

Staffing Guidelines

For each group of 35 children there must be at least one qualified teacher.

The suggested number of children for which a teacher may be responsible without additional staff is:

- 22 if the program is designed for "normal" children,
- 18 if the program is designed for children in designated "disadvantaged areas",
- fewer if the program is designed to include children having handicaps.

Hiring Staff

An operator's advertisements for staff should state:

- Type of position,
- Required training and experience,
- Name and location of the program,
- Where to apply.

Staff Contracts

No commitments should be made to a prospective teacher until the teacher's qualifications have been approved by the Registrar, Alberta Education.

Contracts for all staff should include:

- Working conditions such as hours and days when staff are to be on duty,
- Supervision of children on a playground or in a gymnasium,
- Responsibilities for children before and after program sessions, on field trips and during inclement weather,
- Salary,
- Travel and subsistence allowances for in-home visitors,
- Responsibilities of employee,
- Duration of contract,
- Conditions under which contract may be terminated,
- Benefits such as paid holidays, retirement fund contributions, financial assistance and leave for professional development,
- A clause stating that the contract is valid only if the teacher's qualifications are approved by the Registrar, Alberta Education.

Unemployment Insurance Commission	Arrangements must be made for Unemployment Insurance deductions through the nearest UIC Office. Forms should be completed as soon as a staff contract is signed.
Canada Pension Plan	To arrange for appropriate deductions, contact Revenue Canada - Taxation, Government of Canada.

XI ARRANGING FOR FACILITIES

Find Suitable Facilities

A first step in planning for a centre-based program is to find out if a suitable facility can be obtained.

A program may operate in a school, community hall, church or other approved building.

A non-school building must be approved by Building Standards, Fire and Health Inspectors. To initiate these inspections, the operator should contact the Early Childhood Services Branch as soon as possible because inspection and any necessary repairs and renovations may take several months. The operator should contact the ECS Branch as soon as a building has been selected.

Building approval remains in effect until withdrawn.

Assistance

To obtain information and assistance contact:

Early Childhood Services Branch,
Alberta Education.

Lease

Operators renting a facility are advised to obtain a lease agreement.

Terms of the lease should include:

- Length of time the lease is effective,
- Responsibilities of owner and renter,
- Rental rate,
- Procedure to be followed if rates are to be altered during lease,
- Lease termination procedures.

Renovation Grant

ECS operators are encouraged to use existing community facilities for centre operated programs.

A grant is available to assist societies to make renovations to meet requirements of fire, health or building standards regulations.

This grant cannot be used to renovate private residences or buildings owned by school boards.

An operator applying for this grant must supply:

- A list of facilities which have been considered indicating why each is unacceptable,
- Reports from health, fire and building standards inspectors indicating renovations required,
- Plans for renovation which have been approved by fire, health and building standards inspectors,
- Estimated costs of the renovations,
- A copy of a three year minimum lease with the owner of the building or proof that the operator owns the building.

Portable Classroom for Societies

If a suitable facility is not available a society may apply for a government owned portable classroom. The following information must be provided:

- A list of children eligible for the coming year and projected enrolments for the following two years,
- A list of facilities which have been considered indicating why each is not acceptable,
- A statement from the school board(s) indicating:
  - (a) space is not available in the local schools, but
  - (b) willingness to allow placement of a portable on school property,
- If the school board(s) will not allow placement of a portable on its property, a statement must be obtained from a local municipal authority indicating willingness to allow the placement of a portable on its property.

In order for portables to be ready for use by September, requests must be submitted to the ECS Branch prior to February 1.

A portable classroom allocated for use by an ECS society may be leased by the Government to a school board or municipal authority which will in turn lease it to the society.

The Government will be responsible for all maintenance except daily caretaking services, light bulb replacements and utility charges. The Government will assume all costs associated with the installation of the portable classroom.

A society using a portable will be charged a monthly fee for each month the program operates. The fee will be established prior to September and withheld from the society's monthly grant payments.

Portable Classroom for School Boards

School boards requiring facility assistance must contact the School Buildings Branch, Alberta Education.

For assistance regarding renovation grant or portable classroom policies contact:

Early Childhood Services Branch,
Alberta Education.

XII DETERMINING PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL FUNDING

To determine availability and amounts of provincial ECS grants refer to the "Alberta Education Grants Order", issued annually.

Fees or donations may be required to supplement provincial support. Support needed from family and/or community sources should be reviewed annually when the budget is being planned.

XIII COMPLETING OTHER CONDITIONS FOR APPROVAL

Budget Report Form

All ECS societies must submit a "Budget Report" to the School Business Administration Services Branch before September 30 each year.

School Boards must submit a budget report by February 28.

Financial Statement

An "Audited Financial Statement" must be submitted before September 30, in the case of a society; before February 28 in the case of a school board.

The financial year for ECS societies ends June 30 and for school boards on December 31.

For further information and appropriate forms contact:
School Business Administration Services Branch,
Alberta Education

Bonded Treasurer

Every ECS operator must engage the services of a bonded treasurer.

Bonding should be completed before the budget report is submitted. The amount of the bond depends upon the size of the budget and is usually equal to one month's revenue plus any accumulated surplus.

Auditor

All operators must appoint an auditor who is either a Chartered Accountant or a person approved by the Minister of Education.

For further information contact:
School Business Administration Services Branch
Alberta Education

XIV ARRANGING FOR INSURANCE

Liability

An ECS operator must keep in force a comprehensive legal liability insurance policy indemnifying the operator and its employees in respect to claims for damages arising from death, personal injury and property damage.

Liability insurance must cover parents, volunteers or aides who occasionally assist in the program by a special clause or separate policy.

Contact an insurance agent regarding liability insurance rates and policy which will provide adequate protection.

For information regarding minimum liability insurance coverage see:

"ECS Financial Reporting and Management Regulations."

Building and Contents

If the ECS operator owns the building in which an ECS centre is located, both building and contents should be insured.

If the operator rents the building or portion of a building, the owner should carry building insurance.

If the owner's policy does not cover contents of the ECS centre, the operator should arrange for coverage.

Transportation

ECS operators must make sure that the owners of public or private vehicles used to transport children carry sufficient third party liability insurance.

Where transportation service is contracted or rented, the operator must make sure that the owners have a specific policy clause providing liability insurance for contracted or rented services.

Information and assistance regarding Sections XIII-XIV of this Handbook may be obtained from:

- . The School Business Administration Services Branch, Alberta Education,
- . A local insurance agent,
- . A bonding agency.

XV ARRANGING FOR TRANSPORTATION

Before the program commences the operator should ensure that arrangements have been made for children requiring transportation to and from the ECS centre.

Children may be conveyed:

- . In a vehicle registered as a school bus pursuant to the Public Services Vehicles Act,
- . By contract with the parent.

Grants

Rural

Transportation grants are available for all children who reside outside a city school district.

Urban

Urban operators may request ECS Branch approval to claim grants for non-handicapped children transported to ECS centres. Transportation grants may be paid on behalf of children residing in a city when:

- . A child is being transported to a bilingual/immersion program or a church-oriented alternative program,
- . The area in which the child resides does not have an approved facility,
- . There are too few children residing in an area to make an ECS program economically feasible.

The request should state:

- Which of the above reason(s) applies,
- The number of children to be transported,
- The area in which the children reside,
- The name of the ECS Centre to which the children will be transported.

Handicapped Children

Transportation grants are provided for all handicapped children who require transportation.

In-home Visitors

Transportation grants are provided to support home visits of staff for approved in-home programs.

Assistance

The following may be able to provide assistance to societies who wish to arrange transportation:

- School board or county transportation supervisor,
- Private bus operators,
- Agencies which provide transportation for handicapped children,
- Insurance agents,
- Regional Office consultant, Alberta Education.

XVI ORDERING EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

Equipment and materials should be ordered in advance of commencement of the program each year. Refer to the Physical Resources Guide.

Capital Equipment Grant

A once-only renovation, furniture and/or equipment grant is available for the establishment of new instructional areas. Refer to the "Alberta Education Grants Order".

Federal Tax Rebate

An operator is entitled to an excise tax rebate on purchases of imported materials. Details concerning this rebate are available from the nearest District Excise Tax Office, Revenue Canada.

XVII DISCONTINUING OR RECESSING AN ECS PROGRAM

Discontinuation

To obtain advice regarding the discontinuation of an ECS program, contact the Early Childhood Services AND the Financial Services Branches.

Recess for a Year

If it is decided to recess an ECS program, the following will be required:

- A letter of intention to recess the program must be forwarded to the ECS Branch,
- The final grant payment for the current year will be witheld until the program starts again,
- A new program application must be submitted before starting again.

An ECS program may recess for the duration of one year.

XVIII EVALUATING PROGRAM AND PERSONNEL

Evaluation of program or staff is important for all ECS programs. Local program evaluation is primarily a responsibility of the operator. Evaluation planning and procedures should involve parents, LAC, staff and community resource people.

Assistance

Requests for assistance in planning an evaluation may be made informally by telephone or in writing to a Regional Office consultant, Alberta Education.

Request for evaluation by a Regional Office consultant must be in writing:

- Providing a statement of the intention to evaluate,
- Describing the concern(s) identified which led to the request.

Where an operator has decided to evaluate staff performance or to request that a Regional Office consultant undertake such an evaluation, staff members must be fully informed of:

- The decision to evaluate,
- The reason(s) for the evaluation,
- The processes which will be used.

Material Resources

Refer to:

- ECS Philosophy, Goals and Program Dimensions
- How to Evaluate Your ECS Program,
- Self-Evaluation: A Handbook for Early Childhood Staff,
- Community Resources Guide,
- Physical Resources Guide,
- Guidelines for ECS Language Programs.

Obtained from Regional Office or ECS Branch, Alberta Education.